

Attention: Committee Secretariat.

ROSS SCOTT : ADDENDUM TO SUBMISSION

Thank you for the opportunity to add to my earlier submission.

I am motivated to take this action as a result of the Panel's decision to select speakers at least ten days before submissions close; and that speakers chosen are not informed regarding the degraded condition of the Gippsland Lakes. Further, there is obviously an absence of any scientific or environmental representation; so critical to the Inquiry.

I anticipate that it will be difficult for Panel members to get their head around the current degraded ecological condition of the Gippsland Lakes in view of DELWP reports to the Federal Government that there has been no change in the ecological condition.

I will attempt to demonstrate a succession of managerial disasters, and ongoing defensive action by DELWP and Gippsland Ports.

It should be noted that Parks and the CMAs are but DELWP puppets.

- The lakes have been altered from a brackish/freshwater system to marine; as demonstrated in the SEPPs.
- Previous dredging maintained the entrance at around 3 metres. Currently the entrance is being maintained in the order of 5 to 5.5 metres. This has resulted in the tidal speed increasing from 3 knots to 7.4 knots (GHD report)
- The Tidal Prism (amount of sea water entering) has greatly increased, and marine species have invaded, such as, 5 species of Shark; Stingray; Squid; and the destructive Green European Shore Crab. Sand Worm has died and there has been a large loss of Bivalve (shell fish). Fringing vegetation has died followed by wide spread shoreline erosion. Yet you will note in the A.G's report, that when questioned in the Senate as to why Australia had not reported ecological change to Ramsar; David Papps. Australia's Water Holder replied to Larissa Waters, "because there has been no change", Papps was relying on advice from DELWP.
- The entrance was dredged deeper in a "Trial" in March 2008, and the approval was rushed through over Xmas/New Year, and deemed not to require an EES, or any ongoing monitoring to identify impacts on the lakes' ecological function. The process

was so rushed that the dredger Pelican was on the water and heading to Australia from N.Z. for two days before it had all of the appropriate permits.

- The increased tidal speed through the entrance has resulted in ocean sand being delivered and precipitated well into the lakes by the Flood tide, to around Kalimna. The lake in this region is about 2 metres deep, and it is now a problem for navigation ; and Gippsland Ports management. The Ebb (returning tide), is restricted at the end of the abutment; this has increased the tidal speed at this location; resulting in a scour hole surveyed at 18 metres deep. Ports are currently attempting to stabilize the eastern abutment by dumping rock Rip Rap, at great cost.
- There has not been any comprehensive coordinated monitoring of the impact of the deeper entrance; or of pollutants entering the lakes, mainly from West Gippsland.
- A very credible 2013 EPA report on the lakes stated that “the dredged deeper entrance had increased salinity in the lakes”. The EPA was immediately attacked by DELWP, Gippsland Ports and the CMA. That statement was dumbed down with an Addendum which read; “Dredging is implemented to maintain the traditional navigability of the entrance”. The entrance is now twice as deep as that maintained by the previous April Hamer.
- It is claimed by DELWP and Gippsland Ports that the increased salinity in the lakes is solely the result of over harvesting of lakes fresh water feeder streams. This is a factor, but not the root cause; and obviously the major reason for surface water salinity increase is the deepening and enlarging of the entrance. It should be noted that DELWP manages Water Resources through SRW. And until July 2010 Gippsland Ports reported to DSE (DELWP). So clearly DELWP must take responsibility for increased salinity and the massive reduction in freshwater flows to the lakes.
- Of particular concern is the absence of comprehensive coordinated Water Quality monitoring in the lakes and feeder streams. The function is under-funded and delegated to EPA, CMAs and SRW. Fragmentation is an effective manipulative

tool; and the current system is seemingly designed so as not to provide meaningful data to management.

- Of particular concern is the range of pollutants discharging from the intense dairy farms of the Macalister Irrigation District.
- Pesticides; Insecticides; Hormones; Antibiotics; P and N.
In 1998, I identified that a NATA registered laboratory was falsifying nutrient test results of discharges from the MID to Lake Wellington. Under instruction from DSE management, I was warned not to discuss the matter by the WGCMA CEO; but did so and was sacked. Two days later I was reappointed by the Environment Minister, who stated; “we must have open and honest governance”. (I’m still waiting)

Possible low cost remedial actions to improve the lakes ecology.

- Remove the allowance for slump and accretion in Gippsland Ports 2011 dredging permit. Ports applied for a navigable depth of 3.5 metres; and were allowed an extra 2 metres as the dredger Pelican only visited from N.Z. annually,
- But; Ports now have an on-site hopper dredge, and there is absolutely no reason why the entrance is being maintained so deep. In fact, by maintaining the entrance so deep; Ports have shot themselves in the foot; as it is the increased tidal speed and tidal range within the lakes that is troubling them with scour and accretion.
- A 3.5 metre entrance will not totally address salt intrusion. The incoming ocean water is both colder and more dense than lakes’ water, and sinks to the bottom. The outgoing Ebb tide discharges brackish surface water; so the result for a tidal exchange is “**salt in**”.
“A maintained entrance to the sea , is a salt pump”.
- Salt intrudes into the lakes as far as Sale along the bottom, in what is known as a “salt wedge”. It has been suggested for years that this wedge can be retarded by the construction of submerged salinity barriers. These would be constructed from geotextile material in the form of sausages and sand filled. They could also be designed to be reefs, and would provide for boat traffic. This concept has been rubbished by the inexperienced EGCMA; but I have worked extensively with this material and believe it to be practical.
- All W.Q. testing and reporting to be by an adequately funded EPA.